

## Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 069844

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, HU, RO

SUBJECT: MINORITY/TERRITORIAL ISSUES IN HUNGARO-  
ROMANIAN RELATIONS

REF: USNATO 2536

FOLLOWING IS REQUESTED ANALYSIS WHICH MISSION MAY CIRCULATE  
IN POLADS.

1. A LONG-SIMMERING AND THINLY VEILED DISPUTE BETWEEN  
HUNGARY AND ROMANIA HAS SURFACED RECENTLY OVER THE  
POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE OF BUCHAREST'S ALLEGED  
MISTREATMENT OF SOME TWO MILLION ETHNIC HUNGARIANS, MOST  
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OF WHOM ARE CONCENTRATED IN LONG-CONTESTED TRANSYLVANIA.  
ALTHOUGH THIS ISSUE HAS IN THE PAST BEEN THE SUBJECT  
OF OFFICIAL, BUT MOSTLY UNPUBLICIZED, DISCUSSION BETWEEN  
THE TWO COUNTRIES, IT ATTRACTED NEW ATTENTION AFTER  
THE PUBLICATION IN THE NEW YORK TIMES (FEBRUARY 1) OF  
A HIGHLY CRITICAL LETTER BY KAROLY KIRALY, A FORMER  
HIGH-RANKING ROMANIAN PARTY OFFICIAL OF HUNGARIAN DESCENT.

2. KIRALY ACCUSED BUCHAREST, AND CEAUSESCU PERSONALLY, OF PURSUING POLICIES DESIGNED FORCIBLY TO ASSIMILATE THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY AND DEPRIVE THEM OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS. KIRALY WAS SUBSEQUENTLY FORCED INTO "INTERNAL EXILE" IN A SMALL TOWN IN SOUTHWESTERN TRANSYLVANIA AFTER AUTHORITIES FAILED TO HAVE HIM RENOUNCE HIS AUTHORSHIP OF THE LETTER.

3. EVIDENTLY STUNG BY THE CHARGES AND EVER SUSPICIOUS OF OFFICIAL HUNGARIAN -- AS WELL AS SOVIET -- HANDS IN THE BACKGROUND, BUCHAREST RESPONDED WITH A MASSIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING TESTIMONIALS BY "LOYAL" ETHNIC HUNGARIANS, TO PROVE ITS NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF ITS HUNGARIAN AND OTHER MINORITIES. A HIGH POINT OF THE CAMPAIGN WAS THE PLENUM OF THE HUNGARIAN AND GERMAN WORKERS' COUNCILS IN BUCHAREST ON MARCH 13-14, WHICH STRIPPED KIRALY OF HIS LAST POSITION AS A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL.

4. ALTHOUGH MANY HUNGARIAN SPEAKERS AT THE PLENUM, ATTENDED BY CEAUSESCU, REJECTED ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT OF THE MINORITIES, AVAILABLE REPORTING SUGGESTS THAT SOME OF THE HUNGARIAN SPOKESMEN SHARED SOME OF KIRALY'S CRITICISM. HOWEVER, KIRALY'S CLAIM CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT HIS VIEWS ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF FORMER PREMIER ION MAURER (OF ETHNIC GERMAN BACKGROUND) AND OF JANOS FAZEKAS, THE HIGHEST-RANKING ETHNIC HUNGARIAN OFFICIAL IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP, REMAINS UNSUBSTANTIATED.

5. WHILE OFFICIAL BUDAPEST MAINTAINED A STUDIED SILENCE OVER THE AFFAIR, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE ISSUE WAS THE PRIMARY TOPIC DISCUSSED DURING THE SUDDEN TWO-DAY VISIT TO BUDAPEST AND TALKS WITH KADAR BY ROMANIAN PARTY SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS, STEFAN ANDREI, AND HUNGARIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ROSKA'S VISIT TO BUCHAREST SHORTLY THEREAFTER. AMONG THE ISSUES ON WHICH THE TWO SIDES PROBABLY DID NOT SEE EYE-TO-EYE WERE ROMANIA'S REPORTED FOOTDRAGGING IN PERMITTING INCREASED TRAVEL ACROSS THE BORDER AND ON THE OPENING OF CONSULATES IN THE MINORITY-INHABITED AREAS (CLUJ IN ROMANIA AND DEBRECEN IN HUNGARY) AGREED UPON LAST SUMMER BETWEEN KADAR AND CEAUSESCU.

6. THE HISTORICAL ENMITY OVER TRANSYLVANIA HAS BEEN DELIBERATELY PLAYED DOWN SINCE WORLD WAR II TO

AVOID OPEN FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO WARSAW PACT ALLIES. IN RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER, THE MINORITY ISSUE HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO GET A VEILED HEARING IN THE HUNGARIAN AND ROMANIAN MEDIA. THE PUBLICATION OF A TWO-PART SERIES OF ARTICLES BY HUNGARY'S LEADING POET GYULA ILLYES IN THE PATRIOTIC PEOPLE'S FRONT DAILY MAGYAR NEMZET (DECEMBER 25, 1977 AND JANUARY 1, 1978), WHICH COMPARED THE SITUATION IN TRANSYLVANIA TO SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID, SEEMS TO REFLECT BOTH THE GROWING POPULAR CONCERN IN HUNGARY AS WELL AS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE HUNGARIAN LEADERSHIP SHARES THOSE CONCERNS. THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM NOW AS WELL AS OVER THE PAST CENTURY, OF COURSE, IS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ROMANIA OR HUNGARY HAS THE

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LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO TRANSYLVANIA. SOME OF THE CURRENT POLEMICS BETWEEN ROMANIAN AND HUNGARIAN HISTORIANS ALLUDE TO THIS. AS A RESULT, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE DETERIORATED IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. THE ISSUE IS LIKELY TO REMAIN A POINT OF CONTINUING FRICTION BETWEEN BUCHAREST AND BUDAPEST WITH NO EASY SOLUTION IN SIGHT.

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